



Standard Operating Procedures
Tier 1 Veterinary Medical Center
Restraining a Patient

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Introduction:

It is the standard operating procedure of Tier 1 VMC to operate as safely as possible for both patients and staff.

The procedures for restraining a patient is as follows:

General Requirements:

It is at times necessary to use restraint to limit some or all of an animal's movements. This can be for collecting blood, physical examination, or other procedures for which the animal will not be compliant. Restraint should be for the safety of not only the people involved but also for the animal. Different restraint methods are needed depending on the procedure being done. When in doubt about which method would be best it is best to ask. With continuous training and practice it becomes easier to identify which restraint method would work best for the given situation.

In all situations, communication is key. If you cannot execute a hold, for whatever reason, communicate that information so you can get assistance or someone else to handle the situation. If you are losing a hold position that you are in, that information should be communicated quickly, especially if the animal is in a compromising position.

Types of restraint

- **You!** – In all situations you are the common factor. Even if the patient has been sedated, you are still a part of the situation to ensure that the animal is effectively tolerating the chemical restraint.
- **Leashes** – This is probably one of the most common items in any practice that deals with dogs. Their main function is to help guide a dog from one point to another, while keeping it out of harmful situations. If needed a leash can also double as a harness when properly secured around the dog's body.
- **Muzzles** – There are different muzzles for cats and dogs. Care should be used in placing the muzzles to ensure the animal is not injured (e.g. ears not pinched in the clasps.) The muzzles can come with clasps, fasteners or Velcro. Some animals have a higher tendency to bite and to ensure their safety and that



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of other animals and the handlers a muzzle can be used to aid with restraint. Care should be taken to not use the muzzle excessively, thereby stressing the

- animal to a greater extent. If the animal is too volatile for the handler to place the muzzle, the owner can be asked to assist.
- **Cat Bags** – For extremely fractious cats, a cat bag can be handy. There is a hole for the cat's head. The bag can then be zipped/velcroed up the back or the belly of the cat. The legs of the cat can then be accessed through the smaller hole as needed.
- **Rabies Pole** – When dealing with an aggressive and/ wild dog it may be best to first handle it with a rabies pole. At one end of the pole is a noose to fasten around the animal's neck or body. At the other end is the other end of the cable that is used to secure or loosen the noose.
- **Net** – A net can come in handy when you have a fractious cat on the loose that will seriously injure itself or those trying to restrain it. Once caught in the net it is best to carefully remove the animal from the net as soon as possible. Check that there are no appendages, nails or tooth caught in the netting.
- **Leather/cat Gloves** – The leather glove is great asset to have on-hand. It can be helpful in handling and restraining birds, exotics and fractious cats.
- **Brown Gauze** – The main purpose of the brown gauze is to use in bandaging. It however can double as a restraint tool. When applied to a limb of an animal, it can be used to hold it out for examination or to hold it in place for a radiograph. In a pinch the brown gauze can also be used as a muzzle.

Procedures which commonly need restraint

- Doctor's examination
 - Wound Cleaning
 - All IVC placements
 - All blood draws
- All specimen collections
 - Most injections